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Wrong Numbers

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BAKER, 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

Wrong Numbers

A Triologue Without a Moral

By

ESSEX DANE

Author of "Fleurette & Co."

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BOSTON

WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

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Wrong Numbers

CHARACTERS

NUMBER 1. NUMBER 2.
A WAITRESS.

SCENE.—A quiet screened-off corner, in one of the city department stores.

TIME.—One of the big sale-days, during the lunch hour.

PROPERTIES

A big fourfold screen. Table. Three chairs. Table-cloth. *One* dinner-napkin. Two small individual teapots. Two cups and saucers. Two teaspoons, knives, and forks. Pepperette and salt-shaker. Service tray. Two plates. *Silver* sugar-bowl. A club sandwich. Chicken salad. Muff with a revolver securely fixed inside. A velvet jewel case containing a pendant. A large knitting-bag. Two brass detective badges, absolutely alike. Eight or ten dollar-bills in an envelope. A pocketbook with a visiting card inside. A watch. A little "check-block" with pencil attached.

The stolen articles for No. 1 must be left to the players' discretion, but should be about twelve articles of very dainty women's wear, and jewelry. Silk lingerie, boudoir caps, silk stockings, perfume, gloves, etc.

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MAY 10 1919

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Wrong Numbers

The scenery is of the simplest. A fourfold screen is set at the back of the stage, behind which is supposed to be the restaurant of a large department store—Messrs. Altermaker's. An ordinary table, not less than a yard square, occupies the center of the scene, right and left of which are two chairs. A third chair is pushed under table at back facing audience. A white cloth covers the table, and service for two, of the common variety used in such places, is already on the table. Also a well-thumbed menu card. There is a small service-table up center back at left of screen, which the WAITRESS *uses to arrange her trays.*

(*A* WAITRESS *appears from behind the screen. She goes to table, and pulls out chair* L. *of table; then goes and looks off behind screen, and beckons to some one; comes back to chair, and speaks.*)

WAIT. Guess you can sit here. (*She stands in readiness. A ladylike woman,* NUMBER ONE, *enters, carrying a large knitting-bag and a parcel or two. She is evidently tired, and a trifle nervous and jumpy in manner. Her hat is slightly out of angle, her hair a little untidy, as a woman looks after a long day's shopping. She advances to table, drops into chair, and sheds her packages into chair next to her, at back of table.* WAIT., *chewing and friendly.*) Rest'ront's pretty full to-day! Some bargain sale, eh?

NO. 1. I'm tired out. (*Takes off gloves.*)

WAIT. Miss Medwin, our "Supe," generally has her lunch here behind the screen—it's quiet. But she's away to-day—got the "grippe"—so I guess you'll be all right.

No. 1. Thank you. There wasn't a seat in the place.

WAIT. *I* know it! (*Hands menu to her.*) What 'cher goin' to have? (*Chews.*)

No 1. (*looking it over wearily*). Oh, *I* don't know! Oh—bring some corn-beef hash, and ——

WAIT. (*inexorable as Fate*). *No* corn-beef hash—*no* beef-stew. *Chicken*-stew (*running it off as one word*), fishballs—gumbo—oyster patties—blackfish—whitefish—bluefish ——

No. 1 (*shuddering*). Oh, *no!* Bring me (*an idea*) a club sandwich and—a pot of green tea—*very strong.*

WAIT. (*disdainfully*). Huh! They *all* want "green tea *very strong*"—on sale-days. Awright.

(*Goes out chewing.*)

(WOMAN *watches her off, then cautiously takes up hand-bag, tries to get something out of it, fails, feels anxiously, turns it upside down and shakes it. A small velvet jewel-case falls out on the ground. She snatches it up carefully, with a little exclamation.*)

No. 1. Gee! I thought I'd lost it! (*She opens the case, holding it close to her body as she does so.*) It was worth it! It sure was!

(*With a sigh of satisfaction she shuts case and stows it away inside her waist. Another woman,* NUMBER TWO, *charming of manner, well-bred, and well-dressed, appears round the corner of the screen. She looks about doubtfully.* No. 1 *looks round, with a start at the newcomer; seeing she is just another shopper, she gets out her vanity-case and primps herself with aloof indifference.*)

No. 2. Oh! Pardon me! (*Is about to withdraw; then seems to think better of it. Looks at vacant seat opposite* No. 1, *then at* No. 1.) Is this place private?

No. 1 (*reluctantly*). Well—er—I—er ——

No. 2 (*pleasantly*). The restaurant's full . . . there isn't a vacant seat . . . I've been shopping all the morning . . . I'm just *dropping.* (*Looks hesitatingly at* No. 1.) I wonder if I might ——? (*Waits; no response.*) I wonder if you'd object—if I sat at this

table? (*No answer; then charmingly.*) I'm *dreadfully* tired! And hungry *too*—the store's so crowded. *Would* you mind?

No. 1 (*trying to put her off*). It isn't *my* table—it's—the superintendent's. They only put *me* here as a special—a *great* favor—because ——

No. 2 (*pleading charmingly*). If *you* don't mind, I don't believe *they* will. (*Indicating restaurant behind the screen.*) I can't stand the clatter in *there*—and I should have to wait *hours.* (*She has now worked herself right in front of the vacant chair, ready to drop into it; she waits* No. 1's *word of permission, but nothing comes.* No. 2, *gratefully, as if* No. 1 *had spoken.*) *Thank* you so *much.* (*She drops into seat and makes herself quite at home, disposing her hand-bag and large muff which she carries—the muff in her lap, and the bag on table by her side.*) I blame myself for coming here to-day. The women are like savages. (*Examining her sleeve.*) I got my coat torn! They lose their heads completely—clawing and scratching! Wonder they don't *bite!* And yet, I dare say, in their homes they're well-behaved ladies, just like—you or I.

(*She picks up menu, smiles pleasantly and studies it; there is no encouragement coming from the other side of the table.* WAITRESS *returns with order for* No. 1.)

WAIT. (*looking down on tray and setting order on table*). Pretty quick, eh? You're in luck to-day, to have this all to your —— (*She sees newcomer; stops and looks at her, then stares again. Then says, softly, as a sort of exclamation to herself.*) Hul—*lo!*

No. 2 (*charmingly unperturbed*). I'm lunching here—(*eyes on menu*) with this lady.

WAIT. (*softly, same tone*). 'S *that so!*

No. 2 (*same business*). When you've got everything she wants, will you take my order, please?

WAIT. (*staring hard, but speaking softly*). Oh, I *see!* (*Offhand tone.*) I suppose so!

No. 2 (*going on very quickly*). Just bring me—(*considering menu*) chicken salad and ice-cream—and a ——

WAIT. (*anticipating her*). Pot—of—green—tea.

No. 2. *Quite* strong. Thanks. Yes. (*Looks* WAITRESS *in the eye.* WAITRESS *moves away grinning disdainfully.*) Here! (No. 2 *takes coin from pocket and hands it to* WAITRESS.) Soon as you can.

(WAITRESS *takes money, moves away to exit* R., *looking at it; then turns sharply, looks at* No. 2 *and says with venom.*)

WAIT. Some people have a noive! Huh!

(*She goes off, chewing.*)

No. 2 (*smiling*). I suppose she doesn't like my coming here! (*Turning round and dismissing* WAITRESS *from her thoughts.*) Do you know—when I first saw you, I thought you were a friend of mine.

No. 1 (*looking at her out of the tail of her eye*). Yes?

No. 2. Then you spoke, and I knew it *wasn't.* My friend lives at—er—Ossining. Charming neighborhood—except, of course, that the *great prison's there.* My friend's not able to get about. She's confined—(No. 1 *looks up sharply*) oh, not in the prison—to her *room;* so I knew, of course, it couldn't be, unless —— (No. 1 *moves in her seat ever so slightly.*) You don't mind my talking to you, do you? It seems so silly to sit here without speaking. *Men* don't do it! (No. 1 *sits frigid, making no response.* No. 2 *makes a little gesture of despair with her eyes and head.*) Did you get any *bargains* to-day?

No. 1 (*thawing, oh so slightly*). One or two. (*With a certain twinkle.*) They've some wonderful things at the lace-counter!

No. 2 (*thankful for small mercies*). Yes, Altermaker's is such a *reliable* store! (*The* WAITRESS *enters, dumping things that* No. 2 *has ordered down on table before her.*) Ah! (*Prepares to eat.*) Napkin, please. (WAITRESS *is standing, back to the audience, absorbed in arranging her back hair.*) I want a *napkin.*

WAIT. (*turning her head but not her body*). I heard you the first time.

(*She speaks indifferently, but not rudely.*)

No. 2. That's a new girl, I'm *sure*. If she guessed to whom she was talking, she'd be more careful. (No. 1 *looks up sharply.* WAITRESS, *with a sudden thought, turns sharply round, and grabs plated mustard-pot from the table.* No. 2, *annoyed.*) I was just going to use that! (WAITRESS *continues walking off with the mustard-pot,* R.) Don't take that away, I *want* it!

WAIT. (*continuing her walk*). So do *I*. *I'm* responsible for it. [*Exits,* R.

No. 2 (*rises, really angry, looking after her*). I've a good mind to —— (*Then thinks better of it.*) She'd be sorry, if she *knew*. She might lose her job.

No. 1 (*with a reflective eye*). What do you mean—"knew"?

No. 2. Well, I have a—kind of a—*pull* here. I'm *known* fairly well at this store. (*With a quiet little chuckle to herself.*) You were telling me about the bargains you picked up to-day.

No. 1. *Was* I? I don't think so!

No. 2. Yes. At the lace-counter. Or was it the *jewelry?*

No. 1. I don't remember that I said anything about ——

No. 2. Oh, yes. Speaking of jewelry, did you see those remarkably beautiful pendants they had there?

No. 1. I didn't notice them. Pepper?

(*Handing pepperette.*)

No. 2 (*taking it*). Thanks. Platinum—and diamond. And a single colored stone in each. It's not often you see things of that value in a department store. Dreicer's or Tiffany's more likely. I saw you examining them.

No. 1. *Was* I at the jewelry? I don't think so!

(*She is puzzled and suspicious at this reference to the jewelry.*)

No. 2. Of *course* you were. I *noticed* you. It was at the—er—*lace*-counter that I met you first—then, at the lingerie—funny we should meet *there* too, wasn't it? And then, when we were both pricing those pendants at

the jeweler's—or rather *you* were pricing them—*I* was just admiring them.

No. 1. Yes, but they were too *dear* for *me*—er ——

(*Stops dead.*)

No. 2 (*sweetly*). Ah, I *knew* you'd recollect! But weren't you there when it happened?

No. 1. *What* happened?

No. 2 (*terribly disappointed*). Oh—you *missed* it then! I'd gone over to the opposite counter—(*smiling*) fortunate I *had,* as it turned out!—when suddenly I heard the clerk call out from the jewelry: "Hullo! Where's the pendant with the sapphire! It's *gone!* My God it's *gone!*" (*Looks largely at* No. 1.) And it *was* gone!—Or *he said* it was! *Such* a fuss!

No. 1. I went up-stairs before that happened.

No. 2. It was thrilling! Everybody looked at everybody else suspiciously. I thought they were going to arrest us all. But what could they do? They couldn't search the whole crowd.

No. 1 (*busy with lunch*). Didn't they—*get* the thief?

No. 2. Not when *I* left. I bet they're watching the doors pretty carefully *now!*

No. 1 (*looking up*). *Now!* But that was—(*checks herself*) some time *ago.*

No. 2. Yes, but—a clever store-thief rarely leaves the ground at once.

No. 1. No?

No. 2. Oh, no! They know too much for that. They mingle with the crowd, and get by, in spite of the detectives, an hour—or two or three hours later.

No. 1. Very interesting.

No. 2. This one, whoever she was, was smart. She's probably walking leisurely about the store now—shopping with all the coolness in the world, *outwardly*—but *inside* —— (*She laughs and shakes her head.*) Funny places, these stores! You never know, do you, who anybody is that you're rubbing elbows with? That thief—it might be *you*—it might be *I,* for all *you* know or *I* know.

(*She has her eyes on the other, but quite inoffensively.*)

No. 1 (*rising, raging inwardly, and glad of an excuse to show it*). I don't *know* you. You're a complete stranger—and I think you're pretty insolent.

No. 2 (*pleasantly amused*). Not at all.

No. 1 (*furious*). *You*—a complete stranger—come and plant yourself opposite to me and insinuate that *I* might be—a *thief!*

No. 2 (*quietly*). Well, so you *might* be! You *forget*—I *included myself, too.* I said: "For all *we know*—either of us *might* be." (*Laughing quietly.*) Perhaps it *was* a silly remark to make to a stranger, but you must admit it's a fascinating situation. (*Silence.*) Of course it's ridiculous, because I could *very* easily prove who *I* am, and I'm *sure you* could do the *same.*

No. 1 (*laughing uneasily*). Of course. But then, the fascination would be gone.

(*She leans right over the table, looking squarely into* No. 2's *face.*)

No. 2 (*same business*). Whereas, *now*—(*little pause*) we're "Women of Mystery."

(*A tense little pause, while they look straight in each other's eyes over the table.*)

No. 1 (*with an uneasy little laugh, breaking the tension*). Yes. Er—may I trouble you for the salt?

No. 2 (*not moving, her eyes still fixed on* No. 1). Certainly. (*Another pause.*) Now I come to think of it, since you took what I said too seriously—(*decisively*) let's *do* it.

No. 1 (*apprehensively*). Do *what?*

No. 2. Let's *prove* to each other who we are.

No. 1 (*stiffly*). Really, I'm not interested.

No. 2. It will take the *strain* off the situation. (*Pause.*) Well, now? (*Pause.*) Well?—Oh, I see—you want *me* to begin. All right! *I'll* own up *first.* (*She rises, opens coat and shows a badge, points to it as she speaks.*) *That's* who *I* am—Store Detective Number Three—at Messrs. Altermaker and Company, New York. Now it's *your* turn. (No. 1 *is staring at her curiously.*) What's the matter?

No. 1 (*sitting forward and speaking in a queer voice*). What do you want?

No. 2 (*still pleasantly, but with certain inflexions*). If you'd happened to be down-stairs just now, at the jeweler's *when that robbery was committed*, you'd have *had* to give your name and address. You wouldn't have *minded, would* you? *Would you?* (*Silence.*) Well—*who are you?*

(*The other has risen, facing her, and is nervously clutching the table.*)

No. 1 (*hoarsely*). What's your game?

No. 2. Game?

No. 1. Oh, cut it out! What do you want?

No. 2 (*looking her straight in the eye*). I'm glad you're so—understanding. It saves a whole lot of trouble. I'll *tell* you what I want.

No. 1 (*trying a big bluff*). I've had enough of your impertinence. (*She makes a dash for the screen.*)

No. 2 (*after her like lightning*). Here—here! (*She catches* No. 1 *by the wrist, and holds her.*) You began so well—keep it up—keep quiet. *That's* right!

No. 1. How dare ——

No. 2. S-s-sh! Don't raise your voice! There are people sitting within twenty yards of that screen—you might bring others here. You don't want *that,* do you? Better face it out with me, quietly.

(*They look each other in the eyes.*)

No. 1 (*fiercely, but without moving*). Take your hand off!

No. 2. All right. (*She lets go.*) But don't try a "get-away"—because you *won't pull it off.* You're under suspicion already.

No. 1 (*fearfully*). What do you mean?

No. 2. Didn't you see the waitress's manner? She *suspected* there was something wrong with *you,* directly she saw *me* with you. Better keep still. (No. 1 *subsides sullenly.*) It *was* a pretty *pendant,* wasn't it?

No. 1 (*in sullen defiance*). Pendant—I don't know what you're talking about.

No. 2. I mean, it was such a neat piece of work, it's a shame to spoil it! But I've *got* to spoil it. It's my—living. I've been trailing you for two hours.

No. 1 (*flinging herself sullenly into chair* L. *of table*). Much good may it do you!

No. 2. You began at the glove counter. From there to the leather goods—but you drew a *blank* there. Then you went to the perfumes. You have very good taste in perfumes! From there to the lingerie—that was a *big haul!* (*She looks over at the big knitting-bag hanging on* No. 1's *chair.*) Suppose they're in there, eh? Handy things, those big knitting-bags! I was lost in admiration of your work! But it was at the jewelry that I handed it to you! Not a *soul* suspected you but *I*—you'd have got away—but for me. What a shame! (*She drops bantering tone.*) Come—throw up your cards—come across!

No. 1 (*desperately*). See here! I'm not interested in this—I don't know what the hell you're driving at!

(*She makes a rush to get out* R.)

No. 2 (*her hand in her muff*). *Don't move!* I've a little friend here that will stop you if you try a "get-away." (*She has drawn back the end of her muff and the glint of steel of a small revolver is showing.* No. 1 *has stopped dead at the words "Don't move"; she turns slowly, sees the weapon, and crumples.*) *Sit down!*

No. 1 (*crumpling*). My God!

(*She sinks in chair* L.)

No. 2. Pull yourself together. (*She looks round, keeping* No. 1 *covered.*) And if the waitress comes back, keep your eyes down, and keep still.

No. 1. What are you going to do?

No. 2. Well, it depends a good deal on *you.* I've made my living this way now for some time, but I haven't lost all feeling—*yet! One* thing's *certain.* You'll *have* to turn over the goods. (*Pause.*) *Will* you? Or *won't* you? (*Pause.*) Oh, well, if you *won't,* then there's only one thing to be done. I must ——

(*She has moved up to screen as if to call some one.*)

No. 1 (*breaking up, and stopping her*). Oh, please—*please.* Don't! Don't! I give up! I can't go on! I'm all in! I'm new at the game. I'm not an old hand; and if you knew the things that have led up to it—*you're* a woman, too, and if you've got any heart you can't let them get me. I'll tell you—God, what a life! I've got a kid—a baby; its father's a brute to us both. New York, and not a dollar—d'ye know what *that's* like? That's what I've had to face—New York and not a dime to buy a dinner! With a kid to keep as well as yourself. That's what I've had to face in this damned city. You said you had a heart. (*Bitterly.*) Yes—you look it! Oh, what's the good of telling *you!* What's the *use!*

No. 2. Go on—better tell it all out.

No. 1. He went off and left me with the kid—I hadn't a *cent!* I had to face the situation squarely. (*Pulling herself together.*) I said to myself: "If I've *got* to be a crook to live—I'll *be* a crook!" It was for the child's sake—and my own—*I'd* got to live as well, hadn't I? (*Fiercely.*) *Hadn't* I?

No. 2. We all think it's necessary, but it *isn't.* Go on.

No. 1. I found this was easy. I'd got a gift—a *knack* of doing it. It's kept us both in comfort for weeks. I've done it for my baby, and I'd do it *again!* I'd go *on* doing it—and *doing* it—for *her.*

(*Breaks down, sobbing, on the other's left shoulder, clinging to her.*)

No. 2 (*with the air of a connoisseur*). Ah, that's *good*—that's *good.* That was *well done!* (*She pats* No. 1 *soothingly.* No. 1 *twists her head, and looks up in* No. 2's *face, a question in her expression; but* No. 2 *is inscrutable.* No. 1 *bursts out sobbing afresh.*) Now, I told you I hadn't lost all heart yet, and if you do as I tell you, I'll get you out of it—*this once;* but you must obey me quickly, and give me no trouble.

No. 1 (*quickly going on her knees, catches* No. 2's *hand*). What do you want me to do? (*Eagerly.*) I swear to you ——

No. 2. Oh, I'm not going to extract any *promises* from you—you wouldn't *keep* them if I *did*. If you go on with this game you'll get caught all right. (*Roughly.*) You're the *type* that gets caught. But that's *your* look-out. They say women are hard on each other. (*She looks at* No. 1 *a moment;* No. 1 *watches her very anxiously.*) I'll give you a chance. (No. 1 *moves as if to kiss her hand, but* No. 2 *grips her hands quickly, stopping her.*) But, *first*, you must give up everything you took. I'll take charge of it.

No. 1 (*half-sobbing still and crumpled*). Awright!

No. 2. Everything, mind—the things I *saw* you take, and the things I *didn't* see you take. I know the ways of you people. You keep your fingers in practice at every counter you pass. (*Sternly.*) *Now* ——

No. 1. You'll get me *out* of this place—you *swear* it?

No. 2. No, I promise. Just as good.

No. 1 (*sobbing still*). Awright! (*With nervous fingers* No. 1 *disengages the loot from knitting-bag, sleeves, pocket. Several yards of lace she pulls out of the front of her dress, a pair of silk stockings she draws from up her sleeve.* N. B. *These things must be left to the discretion of the players. There should be about a dozen articles in all. She dumps them on table, with ill-concealed rage, and sobs. Last, with a look of extreme bashfulness at* No. 2, *she turns, slightly, and extracts a silver vanity-case from her stocking.*) That's the lot. (*They eye each other without flinching.*) *Honest* to *God* that's the lot!

No. 2. I'm sorry, but I shall have to ask you to pass over the *bag*.

No. 1 (*getting in front of it*). There's nothing *in* it!

No. 2. Of *course* not! Well, then, you can't object to hand it over. Hurry up! (*Holds out hand. Sullenly,* No. 1 *passes it.* No. 2 *feels about in it swiftly, and professionally.*) Ah— that's a good idea. I haven't seen one like this before! Quite clever! (*Stops suddenly.*) Secret pocket! *Naturally.* (No. 1 *shows signs of great interest, while* No. 2 *extracts a pocketbook and takes out a card; reading card.*) "Mrs. Van Duysen, 1300 Riverside Drive." (*Holds out card under* No. 1's

nose.) That's not *your* address! (*Throws away card and feels in other side of pocketbook, her eyes on* No. 1's *face. Drawing a roll of bills from an envelope which she has taken from case, counting them.*) Thirty-five, fifty-five, seventy-five, ninety-five, one hundred!

No. 1 (*raging*). Aren't you going to leave me a *car-fare?*

No. 2. I'll leave you this five-dollar bill. (*She holds up the bill and puts it back in the envelope.*) I'll put it in the envelope. I *want* the *bag.* (*She throws envelope on table, puts roll of bills in her hand-bag, from which she takes a pencil, sits, thrusts her hand in the muff, and writes on the envelope, her hand thrust through the muff, containing the revolver.* No. 1 *sees her opportunity to sneak off, but just as she reaches the screen* No. 2 *gives a short cough, and lets the revolver be seen in her hand.* No. 1 *stops dead in her sneak-off and waits, her eyes on the weapon.* No. 2 *looks up and holds out envelope.*) For the "*kid*"! (*Hands it to* No. 1, *who snatches it quickly.*) And *now* ——?

(*She holds out her hand expectantly.*)

No. 1 (*eagerly, and with a swift movement to the exit*). I can go, can't I?

No. 2 (*with a still swifter movement, blocking her exit, getting before her*). Oh, *no!* Just *one* thing *more.* (*They face each other.*) Think! Think *hard!* (*She again lets the barrel of her revolver be seen through the muff; with a quiet smile.*) Think *very* hard!

No. 1 (*seeing the game is up*). I forgot.

No. 2 (*smiling sweetly*). Fancy! (No. 1 *reluctantly takes a velvet jewel-case out of the bosom of her dress and sullenly hands it over.* No. 2 *opens it and looks at it admiringly.*) It *is*—a *beauty!* Hard to part with it! (*She shuts it up, and pockets it.*) You have my sympathy. (*She becomes very short and businesslike.*) Now, listen! Pay attention, or I can't answer that you'll get off. You'll sit *there*—quietly—(*indicates chair* L. *of table*) for five minutes after I leave you. (No. 1 *drops sullenly into the chair, her hands in her pockets, the*

picture of gloom. No. 2, *suddenly.*) Put your watch on the table in front of you. Have you a watch? (*The other looks at her, and hesitates.*) Oh! Surely you have *somebody's* watch! (No. 1 *produces watch;* No. 2, *setting up watch on table.*) Pretend to finish your lunch, pay the bill, then walk out leisurely, stopping nowhere, at the *up* town entrance. Don't hurry, and don't be afraid. No one will touch you! (*She looks round, picks up knitting-bag and, with swift movements, collects the stolen articles and thrusts them in the bag, as she talks.*) Now, it's for *you* to decide about the future—but I'll give you a tip. I advise you, for your "*kid's*" sake, to try *another* profession. You're not clever enough for this one. You won't succeed. You're not an *artist.* (*She is up by the screen.*) You broke down too *soon.* You should have bluffed it out—just *two* minutes longer! (*She looks off into the main restaurant.*) Two minutes! Remember my words. (*She glances off again.*) Good-bye!

(No. 1 *sits, her hands in her pockets, staring at the watch. After a second the* WAITRESS *comes in with check, which she is making out. She saunters over, writing.*)

WAIT. Here's your check. (*She looks up, suddenly, seeing the empty seat.*) Hullo! (*Very sharply.*) Where's *she* gone? To powder her nose?

No. 1 (*coming out of her stupor*). No.

WAIT. (*excitedly*). Gone! Left! What about her check?

No. 1 (*bewildered*). I—I——

WAIT. (*with rising excitement*). What about *hers?*

No. 1. I never thought about it!

WAIT. *She* did though! *She's* a smarty all right!

No. 1. What do you mean?

WAIT. I'm surprised at *you!* Lunching with *that!*

No. 1 (*supposing she is alluding to the detective*). *You* know who she is?

WAIT. (*proudly*). I should *say* so! I'd have handed her something, but I'm a bit afraid of dirt like *her.* They

always get back at you. (*Disdainfully.*) Know who she *is!* Some of *our people* would like to get their fingers on *her!*

No. 1 (*staring*). "Get their fingers on her?" What do you mean—"get their fingers on her"?

WAIT. That's "*Stunning Sadie,*" that is—Stunning Sadie—one of the slickest crooks in New York!

No. 1 (*jumping up as if shot*). *What!*

WAIT. I thought you was *her friend!*

No. 1 (*collapsing*). *Gord!*

WAIT. They all *know* her, but they can't run her down. They'll get her *some day*—and then—"Good-night." (*Suddenly, realizing how she has been done,* No. 1 *makes a headlong dive for the door.* WAITRESS *catches her and swings her round.*) Here—here! Pay your bill first. Pay *her* bill, won't you? I let you in this corner for lunch! Pay it—aw gwan, pay it, or they'll stop it out of my pay. (*Holding on to* No. 1.)

No. 1. I *can't!* She made me hand over *everything! "Store Detective Number Three"!*

WAIT. (*staring*). What do you mean—"Store Detective"?

No. 1. Didn't leave me a *car-fare!* (*Suddenly remembering.*) *Yes,* she *did*—the bill! The five-dollar bill "for the kid." (*She eagerly opens the envelope that "Stunning Sadie" gave her. She takes out a piece of paper—her face falls, and she says, staring at it.*) One word! (*Reading from paper.*) "Thanks."

WAIT. (*anxiously watching*). Where's the five dollars?

No. 1 (*furious; throwing down paper*). Gone! Damn!

WAIT. (*eyes like saucers*). Gee! (*Hurries off, saying.*) Here, *I* must see about this!

No. 1 (*starting up and getting ready to go, arranging veil, gloves, etc., with trembling fingers, and speaking between snivelling and rage*). It was a good game, "Stunning Sadie," a *good game!* But I put *one* over on you, I did! I got a *bit* of my own back! When I cried on your shoulder—(*mimicks*) "My poor kid—my starving kid"—I copped your badge! (*She smirks, and draws from her pocket the badge worn by "Stunning Sadie"—a brass article, with a large "3" on it.*) I got your

badge, " Detective Number Three." (*She holds it up in triumph, and pins it on her left side, where " Stunning Sadie " wore it. Mimicking " Stunning Sadie's " manner.*) *" That's* who *I* am!" It's a good one! It's a *damned good one!* (*Up at exit.*) I'm off—to try the trick, *myself.*

(*She goes out in triumph.*)

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